



## TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

### Division of Workers' Compensation - Medical Fee Dispute Resolution (MS-48)

7551 Metro Center Drive, Suite 100, Austin, Texas 78744-1645

(512) 804-4000 | F: (512) 804-4811 | (800) 252-7031 | TDI.texas.gov | @TexasTDI

## MEDICAL FEE DISPUTE RESOLUTION FINDINGS AND DECISION

### GENERAL INFORMATION

**Requestor Name**

AIR EVAC EMS, INC.

**Respondent Name**

SERVICE LLOYDS INSURANCE COMPANY

**MFDR Tracking Number**

M4-14-0874-01

**Carrier's Austin Representative**

Box Number 01

**MFDR Date Received**

November 18, 2013

### REQUESTOR'S POSITION SUMMARY

**Requestor's Position Summary:** "According to the United States Code Title 49, 41713, the Airline Deregulation Act (ADA) of 1978 states that individual states cannot regulate the prices, routes or services of the air ambulance industry, therefore, it is inappropriate that air ambulance services be subject to state workers' compensation allowance and should be reimbursed at 100% of billed charges."

**Requestor's Position Summary dated June 6, 2014:** "if the Division continues to apply the Texas statute in contravention of the ADA, both statute and rules require application of the 'fair and reasonable' standard. . . . The Airline Deregulation Act ("ADA") imposes a single federal regulatory scheme on air carriers that precludes state regulation of rates and certain other issues"

**Requestor's Position Summary dated July 8, 2014:** "The air ambulance providers have submitted documentation demonstrating that their market-driven charges represent the cost of doing business, plus a very modest profit margin . . . The Statute and Rules Do Not Allow for Default-to-Medicare Reimbursement"

**Amount in Dispute:** \$31,290.84

### RESPONDENT'S POSITION SUMMARY

**Respondent's Position Summary:** "Respondent recommended an allowance of \$11,047.07 which is 125% of the Medicare allowance for the services rendered. Considering this previous payment made and the Texas Fee Schedule based on Medicare reimbursement rates, no additional allowance is required."

**Response Submitted by:** White Espey, PLLC

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Dates of Service	Disputed Services	Amount In Dispute	Amount Due
April 30, 2013	Air Ambulance Services	\$31,290.84	\$30,173.83

### FINDINGS AND DECISION

This medical fee dispute is decided pursuant to Texas Labor Code §413.031 and applicable rules of the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation.

## **Background**

1. 28 Texas Administrative Code §133.307 sets out the procedures for resolving medical fee disputes.
2. 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.1 sets out general provisions regarding medical reimbursement.
3. 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.203 sets out the fee guideline for professional medical services.
4. Former 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.202 sets out the fee guideline for services before March 1, 2008.
5. Texas Labor Code §413.011 sets out general provisions regarding reimbursement policies and guidelines.
6. Texas Labor Code §413.031 sets out provisions regarding medical dispute resolution.
7. The insurance carrier reduced payment for the disputed services with the following claim adjustment codes:
  - 193 – Original payment decision maintained
  - IH – Site of transfer to Hospital
  - RG3 – Included in another billed procedure
  - B15 – Procedure/Service is not paid separately
  - W1 – Workers' Compensation State Fee Schedule Adj.
  - W3 – Additional payment on appeal

## **Issues**

1. Does the Federal Aviation Act preempt the authority of the Texas Labor Code to regulate air ambulance fees?
2. What is the reimbursement for the disputed professional medical services?
3. Is there an applicable fee guideline for air ambulance transportation services?
4. What is the applicable rule for determining reimbursement of air ambulance transportation services?
5. Has the requestor justified that the payment amount sought is a fair and reasonable rate of reimbursement?
6. Has the respondent justified that the payment made is a fair and reasonable rate of reimbursement?
7. Is additional reimbursement due?

## **Findings**

1. The requestor maintains that the Federal Aviation Act, as amended by the Airline Deregulation Act of 1978, 49 U.S.C. §41713, preempts the authority of the Texas Labor Code to apply the Division's medical fee guidelines to air ambulance services. This threshold legal issue was considered by the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH) in *PHI Air Medical v. Texas Mutual Insurance Company, et al.*, Docket number 454-12-7770.M4, which held that "the Airline Deregulation Act does not preempt state worker's compensation rules and guidelines that establish the reimbursement allowed for the air ambulance services . . . rendered to injured workers (claimants)." In particular, SOAH found that:

the McCarran-Ferguson Act explicitly reserves the regulation of insurance to the states and provides that any federal law that infringes upon that regulation is preempted by the state insurance laws, unless the federal law specifically relates to the business of insurance. In this case, there is little doubt that the worker's compensation system adopted in Texas is directly related to the business of insurance . . .

The Division agrees. The Division concludes that its jurisdiction to consider the medical fee issues in this dispute is not preempted by the Federal Aviation Act, or the Airline Deregulation Act of 1978, based upon SOAH's threshold issue discussion and the information provided by the parties in this medical fee dispute. The disputed services will therefore be decided pursuant to Texas Labor Code §413.031 and applicable rules of the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation.

2. This dispute relates, in part, to professional medical services with reimbursement subject to the provisions of 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.203(c), which requires that:

To determine the MAR [Maximum Allowable Reimbursement] for professional services, system participants shall apply the Medicare payment policies with minimal modifications.

(1) For service categories of Evaluation & Management, General Medicine, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Radiology, Pathology, Anesthesia, and Surgery when performed in an office setting, the established conversion factor to be applied is \$52.83 . . .

(2) The conversion factors listed in paragraph (1) of this subsection shall be the conversion factors for calendar year 2008. Subsequent year's conversion factors shall be determined by applying the

annual percentage adjustment of the Medicare Economic Index (MEI) to the previous year's conversion factors, and shall be effective January 1st of the new calendar year.

The applicable Division conversion factor for calendar year 2013 is \$55.30. Reimbursement is calculated as follows:

- Procedure code 94002 represents ventilation assist and management (initial day), a professional service with reimbursement determined per §134.203(c). The Medicare fee is the sum of the geographically adjusted work, practice expense and malpractice values multiplied by the conversion factor. The MAR is calculated by substituting the Division conversion factor. For this procedure, the relative value (RVU) for work of 1.99 multiplied by the geographic practice cost index (GPCI) for work of 1 is 1.99. The practice expense (PE) RVU of 0.54 multiplied by the PE GPCI of 0.912 is 0.49248. The malpractice RVU of 0.16 multiplied by the malpractice GPCI of 0.809 is 0.12944. The sum of 2.61192 is multiplied by the Division conversion factor of \$55.30 for a MAR of \$144.44.
- Procedure code 96374 represents intravenous push injection, a professional service with reimbursement determined per §134.203(c). The Medicare fee is the sum of the geographically adjusted work, practice expense and malpractice values multiplied by the conversion factor. The MAR is calculated by substituting the Division conversion factor. For this procedure, the relative value (RVU) for work of 0.18 multiplied by the geographic practice cost index (GPCI) for work of 1 is 0.18. The practice expense (PE) RVU of 1.48 multiplied by the PE GPCI of 0.912 is 1.34976. The malpractice RVU of 0.03 multiplied by the malpractice GPCI of 0.809 is 0.02427. The sum of 1.55403 is multiplied by the Division conversion factor of \$55.30 for a MAR of \$85.94. The provider billed 5 units. The definition of this code is for a single, initial injection. Subsequent or concurrent injections of the same or additional substances must be billed with different codes. Only one unit is supported; payment for the additional units is not recommended. The recommended reimbursement is \$85.94.
- Procedure code J3490 represents injection of unclassified drug(s). This code has a status indicator of E, which denotes codes that are excluded from the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule by regulation. CMS does not determine a price or relative value for these services. If reimbursement is justified, these services are paid at a fair and reasonable rate. This code is not assigned a relative value or payment amount. Per §134.203(f), reimbursement is provided in accordance with 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.1 regarding fair and reasonable reimbursement. The insurance carrier allowed \$8.06. The requestor did not discuss or submit documentation to support a fair and reasonable reimbursement for the injection of unclassified drug(s). Review of the submitted information finds insufficient documentation to support a different payment amount from that determined by the insurance carrier. Additional reimbursement is not recommended.
- Procedure code J2250 represents midazolam hydrochloride injection. This code has a status indicator of E, which denotes codes that are excluded from the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule by regulation. CMS does not determine a price or relative value for these services. If reimbursement is justified, these services are paid at a fair and reasonable rate. This code is not assigned a relative value or payment amount. Per §134.203(f), reimbursement is provided in accordance with 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.1 regarding fair and reasonable reimbursement. The insurance carrier allowed \$2.55. The requestor did not discuss or submit documentation to support a fair and reasonable reimbursement for the midazolam hydrochloride injection. Review of the submitted information finds insufficient documentation to support a different payment amount from that determined by the insurance carrier. Additional reimbursement is not recommended.
- Procedure code J3010 represents fentanyl citrate injection. This code has a status indicator of E, which denotes codes that are excluded from the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule by regulation. CMS does not determine a price or relative value for these services. If reimbursement is justified, these services are paid at a fair and reasonable rate. This code is not assigned a relative value or payment amount. Per §134.203(f), reimbursement is provided in accordance with 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.1 regarding fair and reasonable reimbursement. The insurance carrier allowed \$1.46. The requestor did not discuss or submit documentation to support a fair and reasonable reimbursement for the fentanyl citrate injection.

Review of the submitted information finds insufficient documentation to support a different payment amount from that determined by the insurance carrier. Additional reimbursement is not recommended.

3. Additionally, the health care provider rendered air ambulance transportation services, billed under procedure codes A0431, A0436 and A0422, that are not addressed in the *Medical Fee Guideline for Professional Services* as set forth in 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.203. The insurance carrier reduced payment for the disputed services with payment adjustment explanation code W1 – “Workers' Compensation State Fee Schedule Adj.” The respondent’s position statement asserts, “Respondent recommended an allowance of \$11,047.07 which is 125% of the Medicare allowance for the services rendered. Considering this previous payment made and the Texas Fee Schedule based on Medicare reimbursement rates, no additional allowance is required.” Review of the submitted information finds no documentation to support a Texas or workers’ compensation state fee schedule for air ambulance services.

The Division notes that the *Medical Fee Guideline for Professional Services*, at 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.203, is not applicable to ambulance transportation services. Per §134.203(d):

The MAR for Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) Level II codes A, E, J, K, and L shall be determined as follows:

- (1) 125 percent of the fee listed for the code in the Medicare Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics and Supplies (DMEPOS) fee schedule;
- (2) if the code has no published Medicare rate, 125 percent of the published Texas Medicaid fee schedule, durable medical equipment (DME)/medical supplies, for HCPCS; or
- (3) if neither paragraph (1) nor (2) of this subsection apply, then as calculated according to subsection (f) of this section.

That is, each service payable at 125 percent under (d)(1) must be: (1) a HCPCS Level II code A, E, J, K, or L; (2) durable medical equipment, a prosthetic, orthotic or supply; and (3) included in Medicare’s DMEPOS fee schedule. All three requirements must be met for a service to be payable under the rule. Subsection 134.203(d) may not be dissected in a manner that gives some portions meaning while rendering others meaningless. All services payable under this section must meet all the requirements to be eligible for payment at 125% of the Medicare (DMEPOS) rate. This section cannot be arbitrarily applied to services that do not meet these criteria, nor can it be interpreted to include Medicare fee schedules outside of DMEPOS.

The preamble to Rule 134.203 supports that the 125% payment adjustment factor was not intended to apply to transportation services or the Medicare ambulance fee schedule:

Adopted §134.203 maintains reimbursement of Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) Level II codes at the level specified in §134.202, 125 percent of fees listed in the Medicare Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics and Supplies (DMEPOS) fee schedule, or 125 percent of the published Texas Medicaid fee schedule for durable medical equipment if the code has no published Medicare DMEPOS rate. (33 *Texas Register* 364)

The supplementary preamble to former Rule 134.202 further specifies that

S. Durable Medical Equipment. The Commission provides this supplement to the April 2002 preamble concerning Durable Medical Equipment (DME). The Commission was required by statute to adopt Medicare weights, values and measures along with the associated Medicare reimbursement methodologies. Medicare uses the DMEPOS (Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics and Supplies) fee schedule to determine reimbursement for Health Care Procedural Coding System (HCPCS) Level II items. The new rule adopts the Medicare DMEPOS and supplements the DMEPOS with the Texas Medicaid Fee Schedule Information, Durable Medical Equipment/Medical Supplies Report J, for items not included in the DMEPOS. (27 *Texas Register* 4048)

Both preambles explain and clarify that the only service types contemplated in the reimbursement provision of §134.203(d) and its subparagraphs were durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics and supplies found in Medicare’s DMEPOS fee schedule.

Based on the plain reading of §134.203(d) and clarifications found in the above mentioned preambles, neither paragraph (d)(1) nor (d)(2) can be construed as applicable to the transportation services in dispute. That is, the maximum reimbursement amounts and methods listed in paragraphs (d)(1) and (d)(2) are applicable only to

items billed using HCPCS Level II codes which are also durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics or supplies listed in the referenced Medicare DMEPOS fee schedule (or comparable Medicaid fee schedule for DME and medical supplies). Further, paragraphs (d)(1) and (d)(2) are intended to be read together, as the “published Medicare rate” language in paragraph (d)(2) refers *exclusively* to items listed in Medicare’s DMEPOS fee schedule.

Even if subsection (d) were found not to apply solely to DMEPOS services, subparagraph (d)(2) would *still* not apply to ambulance services because there *are* published Medicare rates for ambulance services even though *those* rates are not included in the specific Medicare fee schedule referenced in (d)(1). Thus, at most, subparagraph (d)(3) would apply and implicate fair and reasonable reimbursement pursuant to §134.203(f) and 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.1.

The respondent’s position that reimbursement for air ambulance transportation services can be determined under the Division’s *Medical Fee Guideline for Professional Services*, Rule 134.203, is not supported. The Division finds that air ambulance services were not contemplated in the formulation of that rule and §134.203 does not apply to the services in dispute. The Division concludes that there is no applicable fee guideline for air ambulance services. Accordingly, reimbursement for service procedure codes A0431, A0436 and A0422 is determined under the general medical reimbursement provisions of 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.1 regarding a fair and reasonable reimbursement.

4. The general medical reimbursement provisions of 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.1 require that medical reimbursement for health care not provided through a workers’ compensation health care network shall be made in accordance with: (1) the Division’s fee guidelines; (2) a negotiated contract; or (3) in the absence of an applicable fee guideline or a negotiated contract, a fair and reasonable reimbursement amount as specified in §134.1(f).

As stated above, the Division has concluded there is no applicable fee guideline for air ambulance transportation services. No documentation was found to support a negotiated contract. Therefore, §134.1(e)(3) requires that reimbursement be made in accordance with a fair and reasonable reimbursement amount as specified in §134.1(f). The Division finds that §134.1(f) is the applicable rule for determining reimbursement of the air ambulance transportation services in this dispute.

5. In the following analysis, the positions of both parties and the evidence presented to support each party’s proposed reimbursement are examined to determine which party presents the best evidence of a payment that will achieve a fair and reasonable reimbursement for the air ambulance transportation services in dispute. The requestor has the burden of proof. The standard of proof required is by a preponderance of the evidence.

28 Texas Administrative Code §134.1(f) requires that

Fair and reasonable reimbursement shall:

- (1) be consistent with the criteria of Labor Code §413.011;
- (2) ensure that similar procedures provided in similar circumstances receive similar reimbursement; and
- (3) be based on nationally recognized published studies, published Division medical dispute decisions, and/or values assigned for services involving similar work and resource commitments, if available.

The Texas Supreme Court has summarized the statutory standards and criteria applicable to “fair and reasonable” fee determinations as requiring “methodologies that determine fair and reasonable medical fees, ensure quality medical care to injured workers, and achieve effective cost control.” *Texas Workers’ Compensation Commission v. Patient Advocates of Texas*, 136 South Western Reporter Third 656 (Texas 2004).

Additionally, the Third Court of Appeals has held, in *All Saints Health System v. Texas Workers’ Compensation Commission*, 125 South Western Reporter Third 104 (Texas Appeals – Austin 2003, petition for review denied), that “each . . . reimbursement should be evaluated according to [Texas Labor Code] section 413.011(d)’s definition of ‘fair and reasonable’ fee guidelines as implemented by Rule 134.1 for case-by-case determinations.”

Texas Labor Code §413.011(d) requires that

Fee guidelines must be fair and reasonable and designed to ensure the quality of medical care and to achieve effective medical cost control. The guidelines may not provide for payment of a fee in excess of

the fee charged for similar treatment of an injured individual of an equivalent standard of living and paid by that individual or by someone acting on that individual's behalf. The commissioner shall consider the increased security of payment afforded by this subtitle in establishing the fee guidelines.

28 Texas Administrative Code §133.307(c)(2)(O), requires the requestor to provide “documentation that discusses, demonstrates, and justifies that the payment amount being sought is a fair and reasonable rate of reimbursement in accordance with §134.1 . . . when the dispute involves health care for which the division has not established a maximum allowable reimbursement (MAR) or reimbursement rate, as applicable.”

Review of the submitted documentation finds that:

- The requestor’s original position statement asserts, “it is inappropriate that air ambulance services be subject to state workers’ compensation allowance and should be reimbursed at 100% of billed charges.”
- The Division has previously found, as stated in the adoption preamble to the former *Acute Care Inpatient Hospital Fee Guideline*, that “hospital charges are not a valid indicator of a hospital’s costs of providing services nor of what is being paid by other payors” (22 *Texas Register* 6271). The Division further considered alternative methods of reimbursement that use hospital charges as their basis; such methods were rejected because they “allow the hospitals to affect their reimbursement by inflating their charges” (22 *Texas Register* 6268-6269). While an air ambulance company is not a hospital, the above principle is of similar concern in the present case. A health care provider’s usual and customary charges are not evidence of a fair and reasonable rate or of what insurance companies are paying for the same or similar services. Payment of “100% of billed charges” is not acceptable when it leaves the ultimate reimbursement in the control of the health care provider—which would ignore the objective of effective cost control and the statutory standard not to pay more than for similar treatment of an injured individual of an equivalent standard of living. Therefore, the use of a health care provider’s “usual and customary” charges cannot be favorably considered unless other data or documentation is submitted to support that the payment amount being sought is a fair and reasonable reimbursement for the services in dispute.
- In the present dispute, however, the requestor has submitted additional documentation and data to support that the payment amount sought is a fair and reasonable reimbursement for the services in this dispute.
- The requestor asserts that the amount requested is designed to ensure the quality of medical care:

The Division has long construed this inquiry as one of patient access . . . To ensure patient access to emergency helicopter service, it is essential that air ambulance providers are reimbursed a sufficient amount to cover the costs of providing the service to patients. This amount is reflected in their usual and customary market rates.
- In support of the quality of medical care, the requestor submitted documentation of a study as described in an article of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, volume 249, number 22 (1983), “The Impact of a Rotorcraft Aeromedical Emergency Care Service on Trauma Mortality,” by William G. Baxt, and Peggy Moody, which reported a “52% reduction in predicted mortality of the aeromedical group” in reviewing populations of trauma patients transported to a trauma center by standard land prehospital care services as compared to the same trauma center by a rotorcraft aeromedical service.
- Additionally the requestor submitted documentation of a study as described in an article of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, volume 307, number 15 (2012), “Association Between Helicopter vs. Ground Emergency Medical Services and Survival for Adults With Major Trauma,” by Samuel M. Galvagno, Jr., DO, PhD; et al., which the requestor asserts “indicate that helicopter EMS transport is independently associated with improved odds of survival for seriously injured adults.”
- The requestor’s July 8th position statement asserts that the amount requested achieves medical cost control: “Providers cannot and do not arbitrarily raise their rates to achieve higher profit margins, as evidenced by CMS data reflecting minimal variation in provider’s billed charges in both statewide and national figures.”
- The requestor further states that

Providers' Financial Data and the CMS Study Prove that the Billed Charges are Constrained by Market Forces . . . the air ambulance charge model achieves effective cost control because it does not reflect the type of high historical profit margins that would indicate a provider's ability to raise rates to an unfair or unsustainable level. . . . The air ambulance provider's market-driven price inflexibility is further strengthened by the national study published by CMS . . . CMS published provider charge data from every Texas provider and reported the average billed charges, along with the 25th percentile, 75th percentile, maximum submitted charge amounts and minimum submitted charges. Not only are the air ambulance charges similar across the Texas, they are also relatively consistent across the country. While variations volume and payor mix in different parts of the state and country necessitate slight disparities in charges, the lack of wide fluctuations in pricing prove that providers cannot and do not deviate from their usual and customary, market-driven charges.

- Review of the health care provider's billed charges finds that the submitted charges for the disputed air ambulance transportation services are consistent with the submitted national aggregate charge range data compiled by CMS as found in the requestor's Exhibit 11.
- The requestor asserts that the amount requested does not provide for payment of a fee in excess of the fee charged for similar treatment of an injured individual of an equivalent standard of living, stating "these providers apply usual and customary charges to all patients regardless of payor-type or standard of living, and expect payment in full except where prohibited by federal law."
- The requestor states:
 

Unlike hospitals, air ambulance providers (1) rarely, if ever, enter into discounted contracts with private insurance companies; (2) have not artificially inflated their billed charges to enable them to offer discounts to the insurance companies while maintaining the ability to recover their costs; and (3) routinely seek to balance bill the patient who is left with the remainder of the usual and customary charges that are not paid in full by a third-party payor.
- The requestor asserts that the amount requested accounts for the increased security of Workers' Compensation payment, stating "In the air ambulance context, limiting collections to any artificially-reduced rate is unreasonable because these providers consistently rely on collecting 100 percent of their billed charges from all patients except where prohibited by federal law."
- The requestor asserts that the amount requested ensures that similar procedures provided in similar circumstances receive similar reimbursement:
 

air ambulance providers charge the same rates for all patients, regardless of payor-type or economic status. . . . the Division clearly noted when it reasoned, 'the objectives of the 1996 MFG were to move Texas MFG reimbursements toward a median position in comparison with other states, away from a charge-based structure [as applied by hospitals], and more toward a market-based system.' An air ambulance provider's usual and customary market rates are the only charges that achieve this result.
- The requestor asserts that the amount requested is based on nationally recognized published studies, published Division medical dispute decisions, and/or values assigned for services involving similar work and resource commitments, presenting documentation of the aggregated national and statewide charge data by HCPCS code, as compiled by CMS, to support that the requestor's billed charges are consistent with national averages.
- The requestor has explained and supported that the requested reimbursement methodology would satisfy the requirements of 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.1.

The request for additional reimbursement is supported. The Division notes that it has reviewed all of the documentation submitted by the requestor and the respondent(s). Even though some evidence may not have been discussed, all of it was considered. After thorough review of all the information submitted for consideration by the parties in this dispute, the Division concludes that the requestor has discussed, demonstrated, and justified, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the payment amount sought is a fair and reasonable rate of reimbursement for the disputed services.

6. Because the requestor has met the burden to prove that the amount it is seeking is a fair and reasonable rate of reimbursement, the Division now reviews the information presented by the respondent to support whether the amount it has paid is a fair and reasonable rate of reimbursement for the services in dispute.

28 Texas Administrative Code §133.307(d)(2)(E)(v), effective May 31, 2012, 37 *Texas Register* 3833, requires the respondent to provide:

documentation that discusses, demonstrates, and justifies that the amount the respondent paid is a fair and reasonable reimbursement in accordance with Labor Code §413.011 and §134.1 or §134.503 of this title if the dispute involves health care for which the division has not established a MAR or reimbursement rate, as applicable.

Review of the submitted documentation finds that:

- The respondent states: "Respondent recommended an allowance of \$11,047.07 which is 125% of the Medicare allowance for the services rendered."
- As stated above, the Division has not established a medical fee guideline applicable to air ambulance transportation services; reimbursement shall therefore be made in accordance with a fair and reasonable reimbursement amount as specified in 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.1(f).
- The method by which the insurance carrier calculated the amount paid for the disputed services is not specified or explained in the submitted explanations of benefits.
- No documentation was presented to support that the reimbursement amount paid by the insurance carrier was calculated according to 125% of the Medicare allowance for the services rendered.
- No documentation was presented by the respondent to support its calculation of the Medicare fee(s) for the services in dispute.
- No documentation was found to support that the insurance carrier's payment was consistent with its proposed methodology.
- No documentation was presented to support that a 125% payment adjustment factor multiplied by the Medicare allowance for the services rendered would result in a fair and reasonable payment for the services in dispute.
- Labor Code §413.011(b) requires that "In determining the appropriate fees, the commissioner shall also develop one or more conversion factors or other payment adjustment factors taking into account economic indicators in health care and the requirements of Subsection (d). . . . This section does not adopt the Medicare fee schedule, and the commissioner may not adopt conversion factors or other payment adjustment factors based solely on those factors as developed by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services." As stated above, the Division has not yet developed a payment adjustment factor for air ambulance services.
- No documentation was presented to support that in determining the appropriate fees, the insurance carrier ever developed its proposed conversion factor through a deliberative process taking into account economic indicators in health care and the requirements of Labor Code §413.011(d) to justify the specified payment adjustment factor of 125%.
- 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.1(g) requires that "The insurance carrier shall consistently apply fair and reasonable reimbursement amounts and maintain, in reproducible format, documentation of the insurance carrier's methodology(ies) establishing fair and reasonable reimbursement amounts." Review of the submitted information finds no documentation of the insurance carrier's methodology(ies) establishing fair and reasonable reimbursement amounts or to support that the insurance carrier has consistently applied such amounts in accordance with the requirements of §134.1(g).
- The respondent did not support that the amount paid satisfies the requirements of §134.1(f).
- The respondent did not support that the amount paid represents a fair and reasonable reimbursement for the services in dispute.

The respondent's position is not supported. Thorough review of the submitted documentation finds that the respondent has not demonstrated or justified that the amount paid is a fair and reasonable rate of reimbursement for the air ambulance services in dispute. The Division concludes that the respondent has not met the requirements of 28 Texas Administrative Code §133.307(d)(2)(E)(v).



7. The Division finds, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the documentation submitted in support of the reimbursement amount proposed by the requestor is the best evidence of an amount that will achieve a fair and reasonable reimbursement for the air ambulance transportation services in dispute. Reimbursement is calculated as follows: review of the submitted medical bill finds that the total charge for the disputed air ambulance transportation services is \$40,978.45. The Division finds this amount to be a fair and reasonable reimbursement for the air ambulance transportation services in dispute. Additionally, the total MAR for the professional medical services and items calculated according to the medical fee guidelines as determined above is \$242.45. The total recommended reimbursement is \$41,220.90. The amount previously paid by the insurance carrier is \$11,047.07. Accordingly, the additional payment amount recommended is \$30,173.83.

### **Conclusion**

In resolving disputes regarding the amount of payment due for health care, the role of the Division is to adjudicate the payment, given the relevant statutory provisions and Division rules. The Division would like to emphasize that the outcome of this medical fee dispute relied upon the evidence presented by the requestor and the respondent. Even though all the evidence was not discussed, it was considered.

The applicable rule for determining reimbursement of the disputed air ambulance services is 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.1 regarding a fair and reasonable reimbursement. The evidence provided by the requestor in this case was found to be persuasive. In turn, the evidence provided by the respondent was not persuasive. Consequently, the Division concludes that the requestor has established by a preponderance of the evidence that additional reimbursement is due. As a result, the amount ordered is \$30,173.83.

### ***ORDER***

Based upon the documentation submitted by the parties and in accordance with the provisions of Texas Labor Code Sections 413.031 and 413.019 (if applicable), the Division has determined that the requestor is entitled to additional reimbursement for the services involved in this dispute. The Division hereby ORDERS the respondent to remit to the requestor the amount of \$30,173.83 plus applicable accrued interest per 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.130, due within 30 days of receipt of this Order.

### **Authorized Signature**

_____ Signature	<u>Grayson Richardson</u> Medical Fee Dispute Resolution Officer	<u>July 30, 2015</u> Date
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_____ Signature	<u>Martha Luévano</u> Medical Fee Dispute Resolution Manager	<u>July 30, 2015</u> Date
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### ***YOUR RIGHT TO APPEAL***

Either party to this medical fee dispute has a right to seek review of this decision in accordance with 28 Texas Administrative Code §133.307, 37 *Texas Register* 3833, applicable to disputes filed on or after June 1, 2012.

A party seeking review must submit a **Request to Schedule a Benefit Review Conference to Appeal a Medical Fee Dispute Decision** (form **DWC045M**) in accordance with the instructions on the form. The request must be received by the Division within **twenty** days of your receipt of this decision. The request may be faxed, mailed or personally delivered to the Division using the contact information listed on the form or to the field office handling the claim.

The party seeking review of the MFDR decision shall deliver a copy of the request to all other parties involved in the dispute at the same time the request is filed with the Division. **Please include a copy of the *Medical Fee Dispute Resolution Findings and Decision*** together with any other required information specified in 28 Texas Administrative Code §141.1(d).

**Si prefiere hablar con una persona en español acerca de ésta correspondencia, favor de llamar a 512-804-4812.**